THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) to (f). To keep a close watch on behaviour of prices Government have set up the followings:

(i) Cabinet Committee on prices.

(ii) Special Action Committee of Secretaries on monitoring of prices.

(iii) Inter-Ministrial Coordination Committee for Monitoring and Forecast of Supply and Prices of essential commodities. These bodies meet at regular intervals to assess the emerging price situation and to decide upon the measures to meet the situation some of the steps taken recently include:

i. Placing of sugar and cotton on OGL with zero import duty.

ii. Placing of import of palmolein on OGL with 65% duty.

iii. Continuation of open market sale of wheat and rice by FCI with a view to dampen the rise in foodgrain price.

iv. Strict monitoring of the growth of fiscal deficit and money supply.

Customs Duty on Antibiotics

6456. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that intermediate use of manufacturing of anti-biotics, except Erthromycin Thiocyanate, carry concessional rate of customs duty of 50 per cent against 98 per cent;

(b) whether it also a fact that Erthromycin Thiocyanate carried a customs duty of 80 per cent + CVD in the last Financial year; and

(c) the reasons for discrimination which has led to increase in customs duty on this intermediate only?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) No, Sir. Only specified chemicals for manufacture of antibiotics attract concessional customs duty of 50% and countervailing duty of 20%.

(b) and (c). Erythromycin Thiocyanate carried a customs duty of 50% + CVD in last financial year. In this year's budget, the customs duty structure on drugs and drug intermediates/raw materials was rationalised with a view to provide a graded duty structure by prescribing lowest rates for the basic raw materials and the highest rate for the penultimate stage drug intermediates to encourage production of bulk drugs from more basic stage in the country. This has resulted in increase in customs duty on Erythromycin Thiocyanate and several other drug intermediates.

Strike by Bankers Employees

6457. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 321 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 19th April, 1994 and state:

(a) what action Government propose to take against the employees of RBI who went on mass casual leave and against the employees of banks who went on strike on the 8th April, 1994; and

(b) what steps Government propose to take to avoid such strikes in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b). Reserve Bank of Inida has reported that it proposes to effect wage cut in respect of those employees who participated in the mass casual leave programme on 8.4.94. It also proposes to take disciplinary action against all such employees of the bank who had caused/ incited indiscipline or behaved in an unruly manner, under the relevant